



State Senator Martha G. Scott

Capitol
NEWS

LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION FOR MY CONSTITUENTS IN THE 2ND DISTRICT

February 2007

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Dear Friends:

Happy New Year! As you read this newsletter, my colleagues in the Michigan Senate and I will have celebrated the arrival of 2007, a new year, full of hope, promise, and opportunity. And we are back at work in Lansing, taking on new challenges with renewed energy and enthusiasm.

Recently I came across the words of past Georgia Governor Roy Barnes, who said: *We are all one - or at least we should be - and it is our job, our duty, and our great challenge to fight the voices of division and seek the salve of reconciliation.* What a fine New Year's resolution that would make for all of us. With the advent of the new year, let us all "fight the voices of division" and come together to develop mutually satisfactory solutions. That means talking. It means listening. And it means understanding, not just with our heads but with our hearts.

Many of you know that much of my lifetime of public service has been guided by the passage from Matthew 23 that says, *Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are my brethren, you did it to me. "The least of these..."* – the vulnerable, the sick, the homeless, and the poor.

These are the people we represent, not just in political representation, but in brotherhood and sisterhood. And we are just as responsible for *the least of these* as we are for ourselves and our blood families.

That's why this year I pledge to continue my efforts to serve our brothers and sisters by advocating for improved health and social services, care, and hope. I will also continue to advocate for contraceptive equity, gun control liability, and creative solutions for the crisis in the Detroit Public Schools. And I will work hard to create a balanced budget that reflects our priorities.

Meanwhile, please continue to share with me the issues that are on your mind as well as your ideas to make our region and our state a healthier, safer place for all residents.

Sincerely,

Martha G. Scott
State Senator



WHAT TO WATCH FOR

As we re-convene in Lansing to begin addressing some of the challenges that lie ahead, here are several of the major issues that will certainly lead the list:

Michigan Business Tax (MBT)

We all agreed that the SBT needed to go. But some of us, including the governor, feel the \$2 billion in lost revenue MUST be replaced. The replacement must be fair, foster job growth, and protect funding for critical health and public safety services. Gov. Granholm's MBT, which was introduced last session but not passed, did just that. Our number one priority will be to agree upon a revenue-neutral replacement before the SBT expires in December 2007.

Balancing the Budget

As long as revenues remain down and the economy remains stagnant, it's going to be another challenging year for our state. Currently, the shortfall is estimated at about \$900 million. It's going to take strong fiscal leadership, accountability, and

belt-tightening. But the goal, as always, will be to protect the public safety and health of Michigan citizens.

Insurance Reform

For the past two years and ten months, I have stood at the podium on the Senate floor and addressed my colleagues on both sides of the aisle on the unfairness and the inequities of insurance in Michigan, particularly in the City of Detroit. In doing so, I was fulfilling a promise I made in March 2004, that I would continue to make these statements until the problem was resolved.

Whether my words have had an impact is not for me to say. But now it's time to move from words to action. I look forward to returning to legislative session to start ACTION on this important issue.

Senator Scott to Co-Host "Music as a Sword in Our Fight for Freedom" – A Celebration of Black History

The legendary trumpeter Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong once said, "What we play is life." And the theme of this year's annual Michigan Legislative Black Caucus Black History Celebration will highlight the importance of music in the Black struggle for freedom and dignity. The celebration will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2007 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the State Capitol Rotunda. The program, "Music as a Sword in Our Fight for Freedom – A Look at the Black Experience," will feature a performance by Regina Belle, as well as speakers, musical and oratorical performances, and dinner.

Preceding the February 28 celebration will be a month

highlighted by Black History events, including: Wednesday, February 7, 2007, "Court Martial at Fort Devens" a presentation by Jeffrey Sweet in the Speakers Library of the State Capitol; on Tuesday, February 20, 2007, a Rosa Parks Tree Dedication; and on Wednesday, February 21, 2007, a Health Fair. In addition, on Thursday, February 22, 2007, the arts will be highlighted and on Tuesday, February 27, 2007, the focus will be on engineering. All events will take place in the State Capitol Rotunda from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Senator Scott (l), joins Senator Clark-Coleman (r) at the 2006 Black History Month celebration.

It is important for every citizen – regardless of race, color, or ethnicity – to support and celebrate the accomplishments of the past. It is, however, not only a time of reflection, but an opportunity to remind ourselves that we must continue the struggle and inform our children that there is much to be accomplished in the future.

The Michigan Legislative Black Caucus invites everyone to share in these celebratory and informative events to share in our history and demonstrate our pride.

For more information, please contact State Senator Martha G. Scott toll-free at 1-800-726-8878.



WHAT TO BE GRATEFUL FOR

- One of our most significant accomplishments last session was raising the minimum wage. The minimum wage rose to \$6.95 an hour in October 2006, with increases to \$7.15 in July 2007, and to \$7.40 in July 2008. This increase was long past due and will certainly help boost the Michigan economy.

- We are also delighted at the bipartisan passage of Gov. Granholm's Michigan Promise

Grants, which will offer 2007 high school graduates a \$4,000 scholarship toward Michigan post-secondary educational opportunities. Half would be awarded based on high school assessment tests, with the remaining \$2,000 awarded upon completion of two years of post-secondary education or technical certification. If students don't qualify on the assessment test, they can still earn their \$4,000 scholarship by

successfully completing two years of post-secondary education.

- The Michigan Promise Grants work in conjunction with the recently approved Michigan Merit Standard Curriculum that will strengthen high school curriculum standards. These requirements are among the best in the nation. They will assure students' chances of getting better jobs, pay, and promotions, and will better prepare students for future college or career training. And that means productive and well-paying jobs.

- Lead exposure is one of the most common preventable poisonings of childhood. In Michigan alone, lead poisoning affects more than 20,000 children under age six. That's

why in October 2003 I introduced a bill that amended a number of Public Acts regarding lead. And through the efforts of many concerned groups and individuals, the bill became law in December 2004.

- But advocacy doesn't end with the signing of a bill and I didn't stop there. I continued to advocate for coverage of lead screening for children of WIC recipients, the supplemental food program for women, infants, and children. Fortunately, my colleagues on both sides of the aisle recognized the need to protect Michigan's children as well. And in July 2006 it was signed into law.



Scott Hosts Annual Health Fair

On September 23, 2006, Sen. Scott held her annual free Health Fair. The event, titled "Get the Lead

Out: Identifying and Preventing Childhood Lead Poisoning," focused on giving participants the tools

they need to combat this problem.

More than 40 vendors were on hand to

provide information and screenings on a wide variety of health issues. Senator Scott would like to thank all of the corporate sponsors for their assistance.



Senator Scott welcomes nursing students and staff from Madonna University, who were on hand to test children for lead poisoning and provide demonstrations on how to avoid lead poisoning.



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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Senator Scott Appointed to Key Senate Committees

Posts will help shape state spending, economy, and human services

Michigan Senate officials have announced that Sen. Martha G. Scott has been selected to serve on the powerful Senate Appropriations Committee for the current 2007-08 legislative session. The

committee makes key decisions about which projects and services the government will fund.

Sen. Scott was also named Minority Vice Chair of three appropriations subcommittees,

including: Agriculture; Economic Development; and Department of Human Services. She was also named as a member of the Capital Outlay subcommittee.

“I am thrilled and

honored to be able to serve the Senate in these capacities,” said Sen. Scott. “I’m hopeful that my determination, experience, and enthusiasm will make me part of the turn-around of our state.”

Senator Scott Sworn Into Office

On January 3, 2007, the Honorable Martha G. Scott, State Senator, District 2, was sworn in at a ceremony at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial. The Invocation was offered by the Reverend Dee Dee Coleman, pastor of Russell Street Missionary Baptist Church, the Senator’s home church. The swearing in was conducted by Judge Muriel Hughes, Third District Court, assisted by

Cristina Tice, granddaughter of Senator Scott.

The official swearing in ceremony was held on January 10, 2007

in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol.

